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Local Former Airman Sues To Void Secrecy Agreement

By Phil Gast
Staff Writer

H. Glenn Hatfield of Columbus says he was sworn to secrecy by the federal government. Now he's suing to end the agreement, saying he was deceived.

His complaint in U.S. District Court paints an intriguing scenario: charges of CIA involvement in the development of a reconnaissance airplane, his assigned pseudonym and what he terms were illegal flights over Soviet territory. Hatfield filed his own complaint as a pauper.

Furthermore, Hatfield's complaint claims, the spy jet was "obsolete and unnecessary" and was used "for the purpose of . . . the enhancement of personal reputations . . ." of the defendants.

The former Air Force airman second class' involvement began at Groom Lake (also sometimes referred to as Broom Lake, a southern Nevada test site), the suit contends. He was given a pseudonym upon his arrival in January 1962 and did "support" work for the development and testing of the A-11, it says. He would not elaborate on his duties.

The CIA is one of 14 defendants in the suit filed last week, including Director William Casey, several agency employees, diplomat Richard Helms, President Reagan, Pratt & Whitney, Lockheed Corp., and offices of the presidency, secretary of defense and Air Force chief of staff.

U.S. Attorney Joe Whitley in Macon, Ga., said Thursday his office had received the suit, but would make no comment. Spokesmen for the two aircraft companies said they had not seen the complaint.

Prior to a mission briefing, Hatfield was told to "ask no questions — just listen, sign the form and get out . . ." The plane was designed to take photos over foreign countries, the suit says.

Hatfield says he asserted "I thought this was illegal," referring to former President Eisenhower's remarks in 1960 that such flights were suspended. The Soviet Union

that year had shot down an American U-2 spy plane and its pilot, Francis Gary Powers, was held captive.

The project director assured Hatfield, now 41, that the plane wouldn't enter Russian airspace and the airman signed a secrecy agreement, the suit says.

His bosses' pledge was false, Hatfield argues, and the CIA and Air Force have denied such incidents and said they "were the result of navigational errors." Hatfield, who lives at 5037 Eton Drive, says he can prove the flights were deliberate.

Reconnaissance satellites launched over a three-year period made the A-11 and other aircraft useless and cameras aboard one satellite "clearly revealed airfield runways and/or missile sites in the Soviet Union and China," the complaint states.

He's asking the court to issue an injunction prohibiting the destruction of any documents on the A-11, which he says is the forerunner of other planes, such as the high-speed and sleek SR-71, also known as the "Blackbird."

A voided secrecy pact would restore "plaintiff's rights to freedom of speech . . ."

Hatfield wants \$10 million in punitive damages from each defendant and \$1 million from each for each year that his free-speech rights have "been unlawfully infringed upon."